IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A control element having a rotary knob, having a magnetic circuit and having at least one coil, wherein the rotary knob is supported so as to be rotatable with respect to at least a stationary part of the magnetic circuit, a sealed gap between the rotary knob and the stationary part of the magnetic circuit is filled with a magnetorheologic fluid, and the coil is configured to exert a variable braking action on the rotary knob.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the magnetic field in the magnetorheologic fluid extends in a radial direction.

Claims 3-4 (Cancelled).

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 1, wherein an entire mechanical structure and a plurality of sensors are accommodated in the interior of the rotary knob.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the control element includes Hall sensors and a sensor magnet wheel for determining the position of the rotary knob with respect to a stationary part of the magnetic circuit.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotary knob is configured to perform a push-button function in an axial direction of its shaft, and a plurality of Hall sensors and a sensor magnet wheel are arranged in the control element so that, in addition to the angular position, they can detect a push-button function of the rotary knob.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 1, wherein an electronic circuit for driving the coil has been provided, which circuit energizes the coil.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 8, wherein the electronic circuit is configured to simulate the impression of a mechanical stop in dependence on the angle of rotation of the rotary knob.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 8, wherein the electronic circuit is configured such that control latching functions and other braking functions are dependent upon an angle of rotation of the rotary knob and of the time.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 9, wherein the electronic circuit controls the rotary knob in such a manner that also

after forcible turning far beyond the simulated stop the braking action of the rotary knob is cancelled immediately in the case of rotation in the opposite direction.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 8, wherein the control element is configured to control a graphical user interface.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 8, wherein the control element is configured to perform the functions of conventional controls on electrical apparatuses.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): A control element as claimed in claim 10, wherein the control element provides an additional feedback response in the form of synthesized speech when a menu item on the graphical user interface is reached.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A control element having a rotary knob, a magnetic circuit and at least one coil, wherein the rotary knob is supported so as to be rotatable with respect to at least a part of the magnetic circuit, a gap between the rotary knob and the magnetic circuit is filled with a magnetorheologic fluid, and the coil is arranged to exert a variable braking action on the rotary knob, wherein a ring of a hard magnetic material is provided

to keep metal particles contained in the magnetorheologic fluid away from a bearing and sealing area, and a further sealing element is provided to ensure that a suspension substance of the magnetorheologic fluid remains in the gap.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): A control element having a rotary knob, a magnetic circuit and at least one coil, wherein the rotary knob is supported so as to be rotatable with respect to at least a part of the magnetic circuit, a gap between the rotary knob and the magnetic circuit is filled with a magnetorheologic fluid, and the coil is arranged to exert a variable braking action on the rotary knob, wherein a ring of a hard material, in conjunction with a sealing element and the magnetorheologic fluid in the gap, are configured to be a bearing.

Claim 17 (New): A control element according to claim 1, wherein the rotary knob covers at least a portion of said stationary part of said magnetic circuit.

Claim 18 (New): A control element according to claim 1, wherein the rotary knob covers said stationary part of said magnetic circuit entirely.

Claim 19 (New): A control element according to claim 1, wherein the rotary knob is supported so as to be rotatable along its own vertical axis.

Claim 20 (New): A control element according to claim 1, wherein the rotary knob surrounds said stationary part of said magnetic circuit.

Claim 21 (New): A control element according to claim 1, wherein the rotary knob is adjacent to said stationary part of said magnetic circuit.

Claim 22 (New): A control element comprising:

a rotary knob connected to a rotor;

a magnetic circuit; and

at least one coil, wherein the rotary knob is supported so as to be rotatable with respect to at least a part of the magnetic circuit, a gap between the rotor and the part of the magnetic circuit is filled with a magnetorheologic fluid, and the coil is configured to exert a variable braking action on the rotary knob.

Claim 23 (New): A control element according to claim 22, wherein said part of the magnetic circuit is stationary.

Claim 24 (New): A control element according to claim 23, wherein said gap is sealed.

Claim 25 (New): A control element according to claim 22, wherein the rotary

knob covers at least a portion of said stationary part of said magnetic circuit.

Claim 26 (New): A control element according to claim 22, wherein the rotary knob is connected to the rotor via a shaft.